

JACOB LAIRD.

JANUARY 26, 1904.—Committed to the Committee of the Whole House and ordered to be printed.

Mr. DEEMER, from the Committee on Invalid Pensions, submitted the following

REPORT.

[To accompany H. R. 9024.]

The Committee on Invalid Pensions, to whom was referred the bill (H. R. 9024) granting an increase of pension to Jacob Laird, submit the following report:

This bill proposes to increase the pension of the soldier named therein from \$12 to \$72 per month.

This soldier, now 71 years of age, served as private and corporal in Company B, Forty-fifth Pennsylvania Infantry, from September 2, 1861, to July 17, 1865, when honorably discharged as of Company D of the same regiment.

Records show that he was captured at Petersburg September 30, 1864, and paroled February 28, 1865, and that he was treated from August 7 to September 6, 1863, "sick and convalescent."

He is now pensioned under the act of June 27, 1890, at \$12 per month, for total disability due to rheumatism and resulting disease of heart, diarrhea, and piles.

His claim on account of the wound of the right leg, filed under the general law, and alleged to have been received while detailed to the pioneer corps and while sent back for ammunition at Shady Grove, Va., June 3, 1864, and a claim on account of shell wound of the left foot, striking the joint of the big toe, alleged to have been received at Petersburg September 30, 1864, were rejected in July, 1888, upon the ground of no record in the War Department of the existence of said wounds and the claimant's inability, although aided by a special examination, to furnish the necessary evidence to show origin in the service and line of duty of said wounds.

A claim on account of rheumatism, chronic diarrhea, and piles was rejected in June, 1901, upon the ground of no record of treatment in the War Department or medical evidence of treatment in the service or at discharge and claimant's declared inability to furnish the necessary testimony to show origin in the service.

He filed some testimony tending to show incurrence of a shell wound at Petersburg, but men who were in prison with him testified that they had no recollection that he was wounded or that he spoke or complained of a wound while in prison.

He filed medical testimony, however, as to treatment in August, 1865, for exostosis of the metacarpal bone of the large toe of the left foot and some testimony tending to show that upon his return from rebel prison poultices had to be put on the foot, there being a running sore, etc., and that he walked with a cane for some time.

A claim on account of rheumatism, diarrhea, and piles was rejected in accordance with law, the beneficiary having filed no proof showing the incurrence of those disabilities in the service, but he did file medical testimony as to diarrhea in 1880, as to rheumatism in 1882, and for both since 1890.

When last examined, on March 12, 1890, the board of surgeons rated him \$30 for rheumatism, \$5 for diarrhea, and \$4 for piles, and that board of surgeons then stated that there was contraction of muscles of both arms, flexing them at a right angle; that both wrist joints were very stiff, the joints of both hands enlarged and stiff, the fingers of both hands permanently flexed; that there was incomplete ankylosis of the right kneejoint, the left knee swollen and stiff, both ankle joints stiff; that locomotion was very difficult, he being obliged to use crutches.

Medical and other testimony filed with your committee sets forth that the beneficiary is now totally disabled in every way; that he can not wait on himself any more than a new-born babe; that he has no one to wait upon him except his aged wife, and that he is a wreck, financially as well as physically, and that he had not been able to work for the past year on account of rheumatism.

In view of the soldier's great age, his faithful services of nearly four years, and his helpless and destitute condition, an increase of his pension from \$12 to \$30 per month is warranted in the light of numerous precedents.

The passage of the bill is therefore recommended after the same shall have been amended as follows:

In line 8 strike out the word "seventy-two" and insert in lieu thereof the word "thirty."